

NEWS RELEASE

Indiana Criminal Justice Institute



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Law Enforcement Statewide to Enforce Child Passenger Safety

INDIANAPOLIS, IN. – According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death among children ages 14 and under in the United States. In Indiana, 45 children were killed and over 4,000 injured in traffic collisions on Hoosier roadways in 2006. NHTSA estimates that belt positioning booster seats reduce the risks of serious and fatal injuries in a motor vehicle crash by nearly 60 percent.

In an effort to increase awareness about the importance of child restraint use, the Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving and the Traffic Safety division of the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI) today announced a statewide enforcement crackdown to kick off the new Child Passenger Safety Week (September 16-22). The purpose of this enforcement crackdown is to remind all adults responsible for transporting children in motor vehicles that: 1) all children from birth to age eight are required to be in a child restraint; and 2) all children ages eight to 16 are required to be in either child restraints or seat belts, in all seating positions at all times.

According to NHTSA, children ages 10 to 14 are less likely to wear safety restraints and are at greater risk of being injured in motor vehicle collisions. "Our goal with every enforcement effort is to prevent unnecessary tragedies and to ultimately save lives," said Mike Cunegin, executive director of ICJI. "We intend to reverse the trend among this age group by reminding all parents and caregivers that by law, they are required to properly restrain their children when traveling in any motor vehicle. If a driver is caught transporting a child that is not properly restrained, the driver will receive a ticket," Cunegin concluded.

"The statistics speak for themselves – like seat belts for adults, child restraints save the lives of children involved in traffic crashes. When used properly, they work, and can prevent tragic outcomes," said Ryan Klitzsch, ICJI Traffic Safety division director. "This enforcement crackdown is a testament of Indiana's commitment to the safety and well being of all Hoosier children," Klitzsch added.

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Motorists will be issued a citation for improperly restraining their child passengers or for not restraining them at all. Police officers may give some motorists a voucher if they are not using a child safety seat or the one they are using is unsafe. The voucher is redeemable for a child safety seat at various locations across the State.

National Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Week is observed in an effort to bring public attention to the importance of safely transporting children. National CPS week was previously held in February, however, the observance has been moved to September in order to increase opportunities for child safety seat checks without the threat of inclement weather.

What you can do right now to make your child safer in the car:

1. Seat all children ages 12 and younger in the back seat and be sure they are properly restrained every time they ride in a motor vehicle;
2. Read both the child safety seat instruction manual and your vehicle owner's manual to make sure you are properly installing the seat;
3. Send in your car seat registration card so that the manufacturer can contact you about any recalls;
4. If your child safety has been involved in a motor vehicle crash, it may need to be replaced. Check with the seat's manufacturer.
5. Never use a "second-hand" child safety seat unless you know its history and you are sure it is still safe to use.
6. Make an appointment with a certified child passenger safety technician to learn how to use and install your child safety seat. You can find a location near you at www.preventinjury.org/fittingStation.asp.

For more information about child passenger safety in Indiana, please contact the Automotive Safety Program at Riley Hospital at (800) KID-N-CAR or visit www.preventinjury.org.

The Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving serves as the public opinion catalyst and the implementing body for statewide action to reduce death and injury on Indiana roadways. The Council provides grant funding, training, coordination and ongoing support to state and local traffic safety advocates.

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